THE CONNECTION: TOTAL OUTCOME PACKAGE



IOWA'S CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM OF CARE

Beginning in July, we will have the capability to fundamentally answer the question: "Are DHS/JCS children's social and emotional well-being increasing when involved in out-of-home placement?" The ability to answer this question will be made possible by the Total Outcome Package (TOP) assessment. Most of our current assessments help us understand why kids are there, where kids are, and how long they've been there, but do not help us assess our children's well-being over time or how well-being is impacted by specific providers. Using this common measurement will increase our ability to share knowledge and make critical decisions about services and care.

This Connection highlights some additional ways the TOP tool will enhance our work. Training on the TOP assessment will be coming soon to a Service Area near you!

Measure Over Time

Practice Benefits

Helps DHS, JCS, providers, foster parents, and parents stay focused on what's best for children. Parents/caregivers who provide input through TOP ensure that their insights about a child's needs are incorporated into plans for that child's care. Workers and providers can develop a deeper understanding of the child, which can make conversations with parents about how they might support their child more meaningful and productive.

Comprehensive Data

Offers DHS, JCS, and provider agencies comprehensive and accurate data about providers' strengths, as well as important information about challenges or areas for improvement. This helps to ensure that critical decisions and resource spending are based on the best possible information – and that children receive the best possible services and care.

Complementary Information

Complements information that DHS, JCS, and providers already collect, enhancing both understanding and collaborative decision-making on cases.

Helps all of us understand and improve our youth's outcomes by measuring their social and emotional well-being over time, ensuring that children receive the right interventions, services, and placements to meet their needs.

Multiple Viewpoints

Incorporates multiple points of view (DHS/
JCS staff, providers, parents, foster parents,
children, other involved professionals).
Multiple perspectives offer workers, parents,
and providers a more comprehensive picture
of how children are doing. The tool provides
information to make the best possible
placement matches and intervention choices
for children entering care.

Best Service Match

Enables DHS and JCS to look at children's needs across the child welfare and juvenile justice systems in an effort to identify gaps and work with providers to plan for needed services.

Red Flag Alerts

Notifies about potential critical issues through timely red flag alerts.